

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for tracking portable devices comprising:
 - a transmitter transmitting wireless inquiries to a plurality of portable devices;
 - a receiver receiving replies to the inquiries from the portable devices;
 - a memory arrangement storing identifier data corresponding to the portable devices;
 - a processor coupled to the memory arrangement and to the receiver, the processor retrieving from each reply, identifier data uniquely identifying a particular one of the portable devices which generated the reply and comparing the identifier data to the stored identifier data; and
 - a portable device control system coupled to the processor and controlled based on the comparison of the stored identifier data to the identifier data retrieved from the replies.
2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the transmitter and the receiver include a Bluetooth radio transceiver which utilizes a 2.4 GHZ Short Range Radio protocol.
3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable device includes a Bluetooth radio transceiver utilizing a 2.4 GHz Short Range Radio protocol.
4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable devices include at least one of laptop computers, bar code scanners, computing terminals, beepers, phones, printers and personal digital assistants.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein the inquiries include an inquiry access code which prompts the portable devices to generate the corresponding replies.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein the processor retrieves from the reply, date and time when the reply was generated, the processor determining a corresponding employee identifying number as a function of the identifier data and storing the data and time into a data record corresponding to the employee identifying number.

7. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable device control system includes a sound arrangement providing a sound alert when the identifier data retrieved from the replies matches to the stored identifier data.

8. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable device control system includes a video arrangement taping an area form which the replies are received when the identifier data retrieved from the corresponding replies matches to the stored identifier data.

9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable device control system includes a display arrangement displaying to security personnel an area form which the replies are received when the identifier data retrieved from the corresponding replies matches to the stored identifier data.

10. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable device control system includes a locking arrangement locking an area from which the replies are received when the identifier data

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retrieved from the corresponding replies matches to the stored identifier data.

11. The system according to claim 1, wherein the portable device control system is activated when the identifier data retrieved from the replies does not match to the stored identifier data.
12. The system according to claim 1, wherein the transmitter transmits the wireless inquiries contentiously.
13. The system according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - a Radio Frequency Identification tag situated on each of the portable devices; and
 - a Radio Frequency Identifier receiver coupled to the processor and being capable of detecting the presence of the tag in a predetermined area,
wherein the portable device control system is activated when at least one of (a) the Radio Frequency Identifier receiver detects the tag in the predetermined area and (b) the identifier data retrieved form the replies matches to the stored identifier data.
14. A method of tracking portable devices comprising the steps of:
 - transmitting from a security monitor device wireless inquiries to a plurality of portable devices;
 - retrieving from each reply to the inquiries received by the security monitor device, identifier data uniquely identifying a particular one of the portable devices which generated the reply and comparing the identifier data to stored identifier data; and
 - controlling operation of a portable device control system

based on the comparison of the stored identifier data to the identifier data retrieved from the replies.

15. The method according to claim 13, wherein, in the transmitting step, the security monitor device transmits the wireless inquiries contentiously.

16. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

with a Bluetooth radio transceiver of the security monitor device, transmitting the inquiries utilizing a 2.4 GHZ Short Range Radio protocol.

17. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

before the transmitting step, generating the inquiries to include an inquiry access code, the inquiry access code being capable of prompting the portable devices to generate the corresponding replies.

18. The method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

before retrieving step, receiving the inquiries by the particular device; and

generating the reply as a function of the inquiry access code.

19. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

retrieving from the reply, date and time when the reply was generated;

determining a corresponding employee identifying number as a

function of the identifier data; and
storing the data and time corresponding to the employee identifying number.

20. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

using the portable device control system, providing a sound alert when the identifier data retrieved from the replies matches to the stored identifier data.

21. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

using the portable device control system, taping an area form which the replies are received when the identifier data retrieved from the corresponding replies matches to the stored identifier data.

22. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

using the portable device control system, locking an area from which the replies are received when the identifier data retrieved from the corresponding replies matches to the stored identifier data.

23. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

activating the portable device control system when the identifier data retrieved from the replies does not match to the stored identifier data.

24. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of:

controlling the portable device control system when at least one of (a) a Radio Frequency Identifier receiver detects a Radio Frequency Tag situated on one of the portable devices in a predetermined area and (b) the identifier data retrieved from the replies matches to the stored identifier data.